KURT RIEZLER, 1882-1955*

BY LEO STRAUSS

I AM honored in having an opportunity to pay tribute to Kurt Riezler. But in accepting that honor I wish to make clear the limitations of my competence. Though he was my friend, and though I am familiar with most of his writings, I cannot say that I have mastered the full subtlety of his thinking. And I am embarrassed not only by the inadequacy of my knowledge. Riezler was not only a thinker and writer. He was equally a man of action. He was, above all, a human being of rare breadth and depth. To pay him adequate tribute one should do more than analyze his thought: one should also describe him in action, and bring to light the man himself. This would require gifts of narration and characterization that are beyond my powers. If in spite of these hesitations I attempt to suggest the nature of Riezler's thinking, I do so because I share with my former colleagues at the New School a conviction that our esteem for his stature must not go unattested.

Before I present my considerations on Riezler the scholar I want to mention that Riezler, more than anyone else among my acquaintances, represented to me the virtue of humanity. I believe he was formed by Goethe more than by any other master. His interests and sympathies extended to all fields of worthy human endeavor. He could easily have become an outstanding scholar in a great variety of fields, but he preferred to be a truly educated man rather than a specialist. The term "professor" does not designate anything of him, but the term "gentleman" does. The activity of his mind had the character of noble and serious employment of leisure, not of harried labor.

And his wide-ranging interests and sympathies were never

* EDITORS' NOTE—Kurt Riezler was Professor of Philosophy in the Graduate Faculty of the New School from 1939 to 1952, when he became Professor Emeritus.

divorced from his sense of human responsibility. Nothing human was alien to him unless we reckon the sordid, the mean, the vulgar, and the fanatical among the human. He could become angry, but he never felt moral indignation. He could despise causes and even human beings, but his contempt was never cut off from pity. He was a man of great warmth and tenderness, but he was utterly unsentimental. He disliked words like duty and fatherland, but he was singularly free from levity, and he retained to the last a certain Bavarian sturdiness that had become transfigured into an unpretentious strength and greatness of soul. In his long and varied career he could not help hurting other human beings, but there was no trace of cruelty in him. He had strong likes and dislikes, but they bore no relation to self-interest or vanity. He was sometimes unjust, but he was never petty.

In company he was altogether pleasant: not heavy or moody, not frivolous or half-absent. Though his was a rare intelligence, only a crude man could call him an intellectual. His speech was in perfect harmony with his being: direct, weighty, of a manly grace, and free from any trace of the spurious or affected. He did not derive pleasure from winning arguments. When I try to see vividly what distinguishes wisdom from cleverness, I think of Riezler. His political judgment was not misguided by passion or by system or by prejudice; in the few cases where I believed at the time that he was wrong, his judgment was vindicated by what happened afterward. All the important points made after the Second World War by Chester Wilmot, on the basis of more or less secret information, were made during that war by Riezler, on the basis of information accessible to everyone.

I

Not having been as unpolitical in his youth as the young Thomas Mann, Riezler was protected against ever becoming as simplistically political as the middle-aged and old Thomas Mann. I encountered the young Riezler for the first time some weeks ago when I read his 1913 work entitled "Outlines of Contemporary

World Politics"—*Grundzüge der Weltpolitik in der Gegenwart* —which he published under the pseudonym of J. J. Rüdorffer. For the proper understanding of the book one must bear in mind that it was published shortly before the outbreak of the First World War and written by an influential official of imperial Germany.

In this work Riezler attempted to clarify the character that foreign politics had taken on during the long period of peace among the great European powers after 1871. He traced that character to the nature of foreign politics on the one hand, and the particular conditions of the period on the other. The most massive political fact was the conflict among nations: each nation concerned with self-preservation and expansion, and driven by unlimited selfishness. But national conflict was not the fundamental conflict. Nationalism was challenged by cosmopolitanism. Both nationalist and cosmopolitan tendencies were growing in force, and so was their irreconcilable hostility. Riezler faced the question whether peace among nations or war among nations is according to nature. He saw this alternative: either the nation is the highest form of human association, with the consequence that there is "eternal, absolute enmity" among the nations, with friendship among nations being enmity postponed or common enmity to other nations; or else humankind as a whole stands above the nations, assigning them their role and place and legitimately limiting their aspirations.

He decided without hesitation in favor of nationalism. The conflict of ideas, he argued, reflects the conflict of living forces; the question of the truth of an idea is therefore the question of its power. He held that we have only to look around us in order to realize that the thoughts and sentiments of the nations are dominated by the national idea, not by the cosmopolitan idea. And history teaches us that while nationalism and the nation state are of fairly recent origin, their earlier equivalents were always more powerful than cosmopolitanism. Riezler was not impressed by the cosmopolitan professions of faith—of which there

was no scarcity. He was certain that if these professions were put to the test, even the socialist workers would go with their countries. Nor was he impressed by the belief that if the nations only knew one another better, through seeing more of one another, enmity among them would cease: increase of acquaintance does not necessarily improve feeling.

But it was not alone the power of nationalism—its power in the present and the past—that led Riezler to prefer it to its opposite. He believed that nationalism stands for something more noble than cosmopolitanism, or at least than that cosmopolitanism which is politically relevant. The politically relevant cosmopolitanism was supported by the modern economic-technological-scientific development. But this development did not strengthen, it rather weakened, the human in man. It increased man's power but not his wisdom. One could see with special clarity in Germany that this development was accompanied by a decay of the spirit, of taste, of the mind. It compelled men to become ever more specialistic, and at the same time it tempted them with a sham universality by exciting all kinds of curiosities and stimulating all kinds of interests. It thus made ever more difficult concentration on the few things on which man's wholeness entirely depends.

Riezler found the intellectual root of the politically relevant cosmopolitanism in what he called the modern ideal. He discerned in that ideal three elements. The first was the belief that human life as such, that is, independently of the kind of life one leads, is an absolute good. The second, derivative from the first, was universal and unqualified compassion or humanitarianism. And the third was "materialism," an overriding concern with pleasure and an unwillingness or inability to dedicate one's life to ideals. This analysis is not very much liked today, but it is historically valid. To show how it leads on to the defense of nationalism, Riezler's thought may be expressed as follows: the modern ideal does not leave room for reverence, the matrix of human nobility; reverence is primarily—that is, for most men at

all times, and for all men most of the time—reverence for one's heritage, for tradition; but traditions are essentially particularistic, and therefore they are akin to nationalism rather than to cosmopolitanism.

It appears that Riezler's decision in favor of nationalism rested entirely on experience—on experience of the power of nationalism in the present and in the past, and on experience of the low character of actual cosmopolitanism. One might say that his decision did not do justice to the possible future, the promise, the ideal, of cosmopolitanism. This neglect of the future is the more remarkable since Riezler held at the same time that the nation is never what it is actually, but that it is always what it is by virtue of its future.

The difficulty is hardly overcome by what Riezler suggested in regard to the essence of the nation. According to him, both the individual man and the nation are living beings, genuine wholes. But whereas the individual necessarily dies, there is no necessity for the death of nations; nations can live in the hope of eternal life, whereas individuals cannot. Therefore the individual partakes of eternity only through his nation, and his nation is the only true way for him. In this context Riezler quoted a character in Dostoyevsky's *Possessed,* who said that the different nations have never had the same God—that each nation has its own God and its own conception of good and evil, its own good and its own evil.

I regard this as unsatisfactory—if for no other reason than that, as Riezler himself admitted, there may be an essential necessity for the death of nations, as there is for the death of beings. Incidentally, it is worthy of note that Riezler did not attempt to establish the metaphysical dignity of the nation by taking recourse to the connection between thought and language. There were probably two reasons for this. In the first place, he seems to have thought that language is not the matrix of the truth toward which thought is directed. And besides, he saw too clearly that there is no necessary connection between the community created by the unity of language and the political community, as is shown by the

modern examples of Switzerland on the one hand and the United States and Great Britain on the other.

One may wonder whether there is any alternative to cosmopolitanism other than the political philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, who taught that the natural political community is not the nation but the city. The nation would thus appear as a half-way house between polis and cosmopolis, and any attempt to bring out the truth underlying nationalism, but not adequately expressed by nationalism, would have to be guided by the insight embodied in the classical preference for the polis over against cosmopolis. However this may be, Riezler later abandoned the nationalism of his youth, and he studied with ever increasing devotion the *Republic* of Plato.

But while nationalism as such is theoretically unsatisfactory, it may still supply us with the best available framework for understanding the present political situation and for enlightening political action within a world that it will dominate for the foreseeable future. For these purposes nationalism is certainly superior not only to the constructs of the legalists, but also to a certain sociology which is guided by the notions of "society" and "growth," for that sociology is likely to make us forget two things that the nationalist never forgets. Societies are still, and for the foreseeable future will continue to be, national or imperial societies, closed off from other societies by unmistakable and formidable frontiers that have been established by wars rather than by other means. And if societies "grow" there is no guarantee whatever that they will not, in the process, take away the light of the sun from others: he who preaches "growth" without thinking of the term of growth, of the peak beyond which there cannot be growth, preaches war.

Riezler, too, spoke of the nation as of a being that, as long as it is healthy, always desires to grow. And he did not minimize the fact that growth is most visibly growth in size, expansion: as long as it is healthy, the nation has a tendency toward empire, toward world rule. Yet, he held, extensive growth leads to disastrous

hollowness if it is not accompanied and prepared by growth in intensity, depth, inwardness, and consciousness—in "culture." He therefore opposed the nationalists proper, those who understood by growth nothing but expansion, or who overestimated "the power of force" and underestimated the power of ideas.

This was not the only point at which he left the way taken by the official Germany of that time. Nationalism, as he understood it, deprived the antagonism of monarchism and republicanism of its former importance, and therefore it made him indifferent to the German-Prussian monarchy. His nationalism was fundamentally republican, and was at least on the verge of becoming soberly democratic. The imperialism he favored was a farsighted, enlightened, sober, patient imperialism, an imperialism fashioned on the British model. Looking in this spirit at the political scene, he reached the conclusion that the national interest of Germany, as well as the national interests of all the other great European powers, required for the foreseeable future the preservation of peace, and he tried to enlighten his fellow citizens and especially his superiors about the possibilities of avoiding that conflict we now call the First World War. He paid special attention to the fact that there was still sufficient room for the parallel, not conflicting expansion of the white race in Asia and Africa. He even visualized the possibility that the end of the period of parallel expansion might coincide with the emergence of a state of things in which war would have become altogether impracticable because all great powers would have to lose much more from war than they could possibly gain from it.

The greatest danger to peace he saw not in the big armaments and the system of alliances as such—for he thought that by making calculations of victory extremely difficult, they would incline calculating statesmen toward a policy of caution—but rather in the weakness of the governments in the countries in which there were strong nationalist movements, and in the replacement of "the system of slowly shifting alliances . . . by an inflexible system of two camps" (the Triple Alliance and the Entente). War could

be avoided in the foreseeable future if the possibility of manoeuvring remained open; and that possibility could be kept open provided the national interest, and not prestige or demagoguery, determined the handling of foreign affairs. Riezler returned to these problems forty years later in his Walgreen Lectures, *Political Decisions in the Modern Mass Society of the Industrial Age.* In comparing these statements made in 1953 with those made in 1913, I am struck by the similarity of approach. I think I detect, however, a slight shift of emphasis: the experience of forty years seems to have given Riezler greater clarity about the source of the weakness of modern non-tyrannical governments vis-à-vis demagoguery.

Nationalism or imperialism as Riezler defended it reminds me at more than one point of the political views of Max Weber. The fundamental difference between the two men is that the Christian teaching regarding war and peace, more precisely the Sermon on the Mount, created less of a problem for Riezler than it did for Weber. Whether this difference is connected with the fact that Riezler came from a Catholic family and Weber from a Protestant family, I am unable to say.

It is not possible to summarize Riezler's clear and broad analysis of the world political situation of 1913. But it ought to be said that it is an excellent model from which students of international relations could learn an important part of their craft. If I had to compile a Reader in International Relations, I would incorporate in it this analysis. It reminds me of Burke's examination of the European situation in 1791 in his *Thoughts on French Affairs.*

The young Riezler, though a nationalist politically, was not a nationalist *tout court.* He distinguished genuine cosmopolitanism from spurious and superficial cosmopolitanism, and he discerned the root of the former in the depth of the individual. The individual is part of his nation, but he is not merely part of his nation: "he has his own task, his own goal, and his own value." The nation, then, is not the only way to eternity. Only individ-

uals, and not nations, can engage in the quest for truth, and this quest unites individuals belonging to different nations. The genius, while being the son of a nation, belongs to mankind. To quote from an essay that Riezler published thirty years later, "the voluntary and cheerful outcast who refuses to conform but bears no grudge . . . is the salt and pepper of any society, and its most important member, though he does not regard himself as a member. He is the spur of a horse that likes to fall asleep." [1] But this genuine cosmopolitanism does not affect the fundamental relation among the nations.

Imperial Germany went down to defeat and collapsed. At that time people began to talk of the decline of the West. During the Weimar Republic, Riezler published, as far as I know, only one writing that could be called political, his lecture "On Fatality and Freedom in the Present Age"—*Über Gebundenheit und Freiheit des gegenwärtigen Zeitalters* (1929). Its theme is the future of Western man. Despite the great differences in the prospect, and the differences in subject matter, the two political writings produced by Riezler in Germany have something important in common: in both cases he opposed "the prophets of gloom" and attempted to show that there is hope if sanity prevails.

Actually, insanity prevailed again. Led politically by Hitler and intellectually by Heidegger, Germany entered the Third Reich. Riezler had to leave the country. The Third Reich and its biggest achievement, the Second World War, confirmed the prophecy of the decline of Europe. During the cold war that replaced the Second World War, Riezler was led to write his third and last political work, his Walgreen Lectures. The message remained unaltered: there is hope for Western man, the Western world is not doomed, if sanity will reassert itself—as it is still able to do, for there is a difference which is not negligible between stigmatizing the expression of sanity as "controversial" and completely suppressing it.

[1] "On the Psychology of the Modern Revolution," in *Social Research,* vol. 10 (September 1943) p. 325. Compare Riezler's *Gestalt und Gesetz* (1924) pp. 95–98.

II

Political analyses were the foreground, the by no means negligible foreground, of Riezler's philosophical studies. His analysis of the world political situation in 1913 was based on the assumption that political life cannot be understood with the means of science, of natural science. He assumed a dualism of methods—of the methods of natural science and those of historical understanding —and traced it to what one may call a metaphysical dualism. His philosophical premises were developed in his work "On the Indispensable Character of the Impossible, Preface to a Theory of Politics"—*Die Erforderlichkeit des Unmöglichen, Prolegomena zu einer Theorie der Politik*—which he published at about the same time as the *Grundzüge*. But since I have not had access to that work I turn to his second philosophical book, on "Form and Law, Project of a Metaphysics of Freedom"—*Gestalt und Gesetz, Entwurf einer Metaphysik der Freiheit*—published in 1924.

Gestalt und Gesetz, devoted to the problem posed by metaphysical dualism, is a document of the fermentation characteristic of German thought during the decade after the First World War. There was then a strong dissatisfaction with the established academic positions, and a groping for a new way of thinking, a feeling that it would not suffice to return from those academic positions to the great epoch of German thought—the epoch from Kant to Hegel. There was awareness of the general direction in which, it was believed, one had to move, but there was no clarity or certainty about the way. One could discern two disparate intellectual sources of the prevailing dissatisfaction and unrest: Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. At the end of the First World War there were three significant academic positions; these, in the order of their emergence, were the neo-Kantianism of the school of Marburg, Dilthey's philosophy of life, and phenomenology.

It is somewhat surprising that Riezler was more impressed by the Marburg school than by its rivals, though his aspirations had least in common with its tenets or tendencies. From conversations with him I gathered that the reason lay primarily in Her-

mann Cohen, the founder of the school of Marburg. Cohen surpassed all other German professors of philosophy of the period between 1871 and 1925 in the fire and power of his soul. Passion and power in the originator of a doctrine do not establish the doctrine's truth, but for Riezler they were indispensable conditions for paying serious and sustained attention to the doctrine. As regards the trans-academic forces that agitated the German mind, Riezler was not touched at all by Kierkegaard, but was deeply affected by Nietzsche.

In the book under consideration Riezler started with accepting a fundamental dualism, which he expressed as law and form—the inorganic and the living, nature and mind, necessity and freedom. He rejected the view that one of the two opposites can be reduced to, or deduced from, the other: mind cannot be understood as a product or effect of nature, nor can nature be understood as a derivative from mind. He likewise rejected the view that the fundamental dualism can be conceived as a mere dualism of points of view: the unity of man, who partakes of both nature and its opposite, demands a single point of view from which he in his unity can be grasped. For fundamentally the same reason one cannot solve the difficulty by ascribing one of the two opposites to the phenomenal world and the other to the thing-in-itself: both opposites belong to one and the same world. What is required, then, is not merely a theory of knowledge, or even a critique of the human mind, but a metaphysics whose theme is the whole of the one world as that of a world characterized by a fundamental dualism. But, Riezler added, this metaphysics must be critical.

Critical metaphysics, in contradistinction to the obsolete ontological metaphysics, is based on the Kantian insight that things qua things depend on human knowledge, are constituted by human knowledge, in other words, the whole conceived of as a totality of things cannot exist. "The central question" of metaphysics is therefore "the question of the subject, the ego, the soul, or the monad." Riezler did not speak here of reason or mind; he con-

ceived of reason or mind as part of the subject or the soul. In other words, the spontaneity that is characteristic of the subject is spontaneity not only of reason or understanding, as Kant had taught, but of the senses as well. This does not mean, however, that the subject is man. It is merely due to human pride that men regard man as superior in dignity to plants and to brutes. Nor is the subject God. However this may be, critical metaphysics, being essentially concerned with the subject or the soul, is "metaphysics of freedom."

If critical metaphysics is metaphysics of freedom, necessity must be understood as derivative from freedom: the dualism of freedom and necessity reveals itself as only provisional. Only in the peripheral perspective of man does a broader freedom appear as necessity. Necessity, fatality, determinacy is in truth nothing other than the mutual limitation of free, creative powers and the dependence of creative powers on their own creations. Similarly, other dualisms prove to be merely provisional. Thus it may appear that Riezler simply suppressed the dualism from which he started.

No pair of opposites is stressed more strongly in *Gestalt und Gesetz* than that of law and form: the mathematical formula of the scientific law as opposed to its ancestor, the Platonic-Aristotelian idea or form—or rather, general rules as opposed to the concrete gestalt. And yet this dualism, too, proves to be provisional. This does not mean that the extensive discussion that Riezler devoted to it is superfluous. The opposition of law and form, the movement from law to form, is indispensable if the true character of reality is to be understood. Thinking in terms of law, though inevitable for man, is the basic obstacle to the understanding of reality. Yet one must also beware of the equally faulty opposite extreme, which is that of regarding reality as a blind, creative will that lacks direction, meaning, or a goal. And the mean between these faulty extremes, law and will, is form.

It is only by the analysis of form that Riezler discovered the pair of fundamental opposites and therewith established not

indeed their reconciliation but their essential inseparability. Form is generated by a process that has no other meaning than to generate forms, ever higher forms. This process does not precede form: the forming is always itself formed. Form is what it is by its own formative action. Every form, everything that is, points beyond itself, tends beyond itself. It is less than it ought to be. Reality lies between Is and Ought. The fundamental and eternal antinomy of the Is and the Ought constitutes reality. The world is eternal disharmony, striving, longing, endeavor, *eros,* and therefore eternal life. It strives for the infinite, permanent, and perfect, and achieves only the finite, transitory, and imperfect. It is eternally imperfect: everything good is good only by virtue of some evil; love is inseparable from hatred, joy from pain; every achievement is bought at the price of some failure; every coming into being is a perishing. There is no possibility of redemption by human or divine means: not even Heaven itself can be redeemed. But precisely for this reason, the world is eternally alive. In theological language, God is not, He is eternally becoming.

Reality thus understood must consist of an infinite number of forms, formative forms, subjects, or mortal monads, each of them qualitatively different from all others—unique. These monads are not isolated from one another. Each monad is, as it were, within others, and by virtue of its unique striving is in conflict with the others: reality is the eternal conflict of infinitely many monads. There is no harmony among them, since there does not exist the one uncreated central monad. Every monad is the center, and therefore every monad is peripheral. Every monad longs for the impossible center; this longing is life. Every monad has its own perspective: reality is something different for every monad. Reality is an infinite process which gives rise to, or rather consists of, an infinite number of processes, that is, formation of forms, and which reveals itself only in an infinite number of incompatible perspectives. In this infinity everything is means and everything is end: reality is not a hierarchic order.

But does this "eternal relativity" not destroy the unity of the world? Does it not lead to the consequence that nothing is true and everything is permitted? Riezler denied this. There remains something firm and stable, there remains a unity, but this unity, one and unchangeable, cannot be found in any "absolute suchness" or in any form, to say nothing of number or law. The unity of the world is the unity of fate, the fate of each of its parts: birth and death, striving and failure, and so on. In moving from neo-Kantianism to his critical metaphysics, from law to form and to the ground of form, Riezler moved from the unity of method to the unity of fate.

From what has been said it follows that critical metaphysics is distinguished from the ontological metaphysics of the past not only by its theme but by its mode as well. It is not theoretical. It does not imply that one leaves the world of change for the permanent or eternal. Philosophy as critical metaphysics is aware of the limitation of philosophy. There is a disproportion between the breadth of philosophy's task (to grasp the whole, the whole process) and the narrowness of its means (concepts). Philosophy needs concepts, and must break through its concepts. Its task is unfinishable. Its fate is tragic—as tragic as the fate of every other manifestation of life. Thus while philosophy is unable to grasp the whole by its concepts, it copies or represents the whole by its fate—for the whole is that unity which is the fate of every part of the whole. The eternal antinomy at the bottom of everything cannot be looked at in detachment; it discloses its meaning only if it is experienced—if it is experienced in the anguish of the radically isolated individual, and if that experience culminates in an ultimate "And in spite of it." Philosophy means honorably to come to grief, obstinately to refuse the delusion of redemption, to say yes to, or to love, this world as the only world. In this way, and only in this way, does it appear that not everything is permitted.

The phenomena that led Riezler from law to form were the living beings and the works of art. But these phenomena are not

sufficient to support his speculations about the ground of reality. In these speculations he was guided by what he regarded as the phenomenon of history: history as the creation of ever new forms, of ever higher forms. His metaphysics is an attempt to understand nature after the analogy of history. Accordingly he asserted that time, and not space, belongs to the core of reality—nay, *is* the core of reality. "Time is the longing of the deity for itself."

It is only with a certain difficulty that I recognize in *Gestalt und Gesetz* the Riezler I knew. The differences between *Gestalt und Gesetz* and his later books may be traced to a single cause: his later thought was shaped both by the influence of Heidegger and by the reaction to him. Not indeed Riezler's deepest tendency, but the way in which he expressed it or did not express it, was decisively affected by Heidegger.

It would be an understatement to say that Heidegger was the greatest contemporary power that Riezler encountered. One has to go back to Hegel to find another professor of philosophy who affected in a comparable manner the thought of Germany, indeed of Europe. But Hegel had some contemporaries whose power equalled his, or at any rate whom one could compare to him without being manifestly foolish. Heidegger far surpasses all his contemporaries. This could be seen long before he became known to the general public. As soon as he appeared on the scene, he stood in its center and began to dominate it. His domination grew almost continuously in extent and in intensity. He gave adequate expression to the prevailing unrest and dissatisfaction because he had clarity and certainty, if not about the whole way, at least about the first and decisive steps. The fermentation or the tempest gradually ceased. Eventually a state was reached which the outsider is inclined to describe as paralysis of the critical faculties: philosophizing now seems to have been transformed into listening with reverence to the incipient *mythoi* of Heidegger.

> Tum, pietate gravem ac meritis si forte virum quem
> Conspexere, silent arrectisque auribus adstant.

Riezler delivered his speech on *Gebundenheit und Freiheit des gegenwärtigen Zeitalters* in 1929, before an audience in Davos that had just listened to a debate between Heidegger and Cassirer. Riezler took the side of Heidegger without hesitation. There was no alternative. Mere sensitivity to greatness would have dictated Riezler's choice. Cassirer represented the established academic position. He was a distinguished professor of philosophy, but he was no philosopher. He was erudite but he had no passion. He was a clear writer but his clarity and placidity were not equalled by his sensitivity to the problems. Having been a disciple of Hermann Cohen, he had transformed Cohen's philosophic system, the very center of which was ethics, into a philosophy of symbolic forms in which ethics had silently disappeared. Heidegger, on the other hand, explicitly denies the possibility of ethics, because he feels that there is a revolting disproportion between the idea of ethics and the phenomena that ethics is supposed to articulate.

In *Gestalt und Gesetz,* it may be recalled, Riezler had found the unity of the world not in any "suchness," which would be accessible to a detached view, but in the fate of each of its parts. This fate was said to disclose itself only by being experienced in the anguish of the radically isolated individual; the parts of the whole were conceived of as mortal monads. One could say that Riezler had identified "the substance" with the fate, the specific finiteness, of the mortal monad. Thus he was not unprepared for Heidegger's thesis, according to which "the substance" is *Existenz.* Yet Riezler's mortal monad was not man in particular but any living being, that is, any being—though man and man alone had supplied him with the clue to the other beings. He had attempted to understand the whole from the likeness of man or of history. What he learned from Heidegger was, in the first place, that such an attempt presupposes a clarification of what man is.

But, as Riezler had stressed, the question of the What or of "suchness" does not go to the root; the fundamental question must concern the fate of man, or, as Heidegger said, his *esse* his *Existenz.*

Heidegger's analysis of *Existenz* is meant to be the fundamental ontology, "the first philosophy," for philosophy is nothing other than ontology. Riezler learned from Heidegger above all that philosophy is ontology. In *Gestalt und Gesetz* he had suggested that everything comes into being and perishes, or that nothing "is" except coming into being and perishing. He had thus touched on the ontological problem, but at the same time he had rejected ontology as obsolete. In his later writings, however, he identified philosophy with ontology.

One can express Heidegger's notion of ontology most simply by using Platonic expressions in an un-Platonic sense. Ontology is concerned not with beings, but with that which we mean whenever we say of anything that it "is," or with that by virtue of which beings are, or with that through partaking of which beings are and are said to be; this *esse,* the ground of all beings—as distinguished from *entia*—is not a being but is beyond being and beingness. The distinction between *esse* and *entia* enabled Riezler to articulate what in fact had been the most fundamental distinction used in *Gestalt und Gesetz:* the distinction between fate, which can never be a thing or an object, and everything else, which is or can become a thing or an object.

III

The first book Riezler composed on this basis is his *Parmenides* (1934), the only work of his that is devoted to a subject belonging to the history of philosophy. The historical problem, the problem of the meaning of Parmenides' poem, was for Riezler at one with the most important "systematic" problem. The ontological problem is, to begin with, not intelligible to us, because we are the heirs to a tradition of many centuries in which the ontological problem (that of *esse*) was mistaken for the cosmological problem (that of the totality of *entia*) or for the theological problem (that of the highest *ens*)—a tradition which, in its modern form, gradually lost the last vestige of memory of the ontological problem. All our habits of thinking, all the concepts that are at our dis-

posal, stem at best from the time in which the ontological problem had begun to be overlaid or superseded by the cosmological or the theological problem. The ontological problem appears clearly and purely only in the beginning of Western thought, and in particular in Parmenides. To understand the ontological problem means, then, to liberate oneself from the shackles of a tradition which conceals the problem, or to recover the origin of our tradition: the "systematic" problem is inseparable from the historical problem.

In this Riezler followed Heidegger, for whom the elaboration of the ontological problem is inseparable from the *Destruktion* of the philosophic tradition. But Riezler deviated from Heidegger in a decisive point. Heidegger's return to the origin of Western thought serves the purpose of overcoming the limitations of Western thought, particularly of Greek thought. But Riezler held that early Greek ontology is the true and final foundation of ontology. According to Heidegger the essential limitation of Greek ontology shows itself in the fact that the Greeks understood "to be" as "to be present or near." Riezler, however, accepted the Greek view, according to which only "to be present" is "to be truly." In his copy of the first edition of Diels' *Vorsokratiker* he wrote the following words on the margin at the beginning of Parmenides' fragments: "Gegen dieses verstaubte Gold der Philosophie ist alles seit hunderten von Jahren nur vergoldeter Staub" —compared with this gold of philosophy which is covered by dust, everything else for centuries has been only dust covered by gold. And at the end of his *Parmenides* he indicated his belief that among all post-Greek thinkers only Nietzsche would have been favored by Parmenides with an intimation of the right way: the same does not have to return eternally, for it is always wholly present.

It is necessary to explain briefly what Riezler understood by ontology. The most fundamental presupposition of all thought is what one may call the decision as to what "to be" means. For instance, modern science may be said to identify "to be" with "to

be observable by everyone" or "to be a possible object" or "to belong to the spatial-temporal order." "To be" thus understood is relative to the observer, to any observer, to the anonymous observer. But we divine somehow that "to be" means above all "to be in itself" and not merely "to be relative . . ."; "to be" means above all and primarily to be a subject and not an object. The anonymous observer would then "be" in a more fundamental sense than any or all of his objects. Furthermore, the anonymous observer "is" not according to that meaning of "to be" which is authoritative for him: we can observe only this or that observer, who is always much more than the anonymous observer. The anonymous observer, and everything that "is" only in relation to him, is an abstraction, and we divine somehow that "to be" means primarily "to be concrete."

"To be concrete" means not merely to be a particular being but likewise to belong to a particular whole, to a particular dynamic context; a particular being divorced from its particular dynamic context is an abstraction. Every real observer belongs to such a dynamic context. In proportion as he leaves that context, as he looks at it from without, he misses the concrete: true reality is "reality seen from the inside." This implies that in order to be truly real, reality must be "seen": if there are no human beings there cannot be concreteness.

However this may be, if "to be" means "to be concrete," the fundamental question cannot concern this or that concrete someone or something, or the totality of concrete someones and somethings in their concrete contexts, but concreteness as such. More generally and more cautiously, the fundamental question concerns not this or that being, or the totality of beings, but beingness.

Beingness is distinguished from the beings as the One from the Many. This does not mean that beingness is the transcendent God whereas the beings are His creatures in this world. Beingness is nothing but the ground of the this-worldliness of everything in this world; the One is only in the Many; beingness is not without beings, and vice versa. Nor is beingness related to

the beings as the whole to the parts. Beingness is the one fate, the one order, the one law of all beings, although we have access to beingness only in the case of man. The unity of beingness does not mean simplicity, but unity of the different. Beingness has a complex articulation; it is a whole consisting of a variety of elements or "powers," each of which demands the others and is co-present in them; it is a texture in which each thread entails all others, or in which the whole inheres in each thread. It is this whole texture by virtue of which any being "is." Whereas all beings come into being and perish, beingness is unchangeable, eternal, timeless. At the same time, however, beingness is said to be "occurrence," and it is for this reason that Riezler preferred to use the verb *esse* rather than the noun "beingness."

In the light of ontology, thus understood, Riezler approached the fragments of Parmenides' poem. It would be more accurate to say that Riezler, having become aware of the ontological problem, turned to Parmenides, and that his ontology was partly shaped by what he learned from him. Parmenides' poem consists of two parts, the first devoted to truth, the second to opinion. According to the traditional or vulgar interpretation, Parmenides taught in the first part that being is one, and that therefore manyness and change do not exist or are mere appearance or opinion; even knowledge and being must be identical. In the second part he presented the general opinion of mankind, according to which manyness and change exist, by deducing that opinion from its false principle that being is not one but two (say, light and darkness); the world of appearance can be understood as a mixture of light and darkness, as Parmenides showed by presenting the genesis of the many and changing things out of that mixture.

Riezler, who continued the way of interpretation that was opened by Karl Reinhardt, contended that Parmenides denied manyness and change not to the beings but to beingness. Opinion consists not in admitting manyness and change, but in being blind to the unchangeable unity that underlies and makes possible manyness and change. The unity of beingness is a unity of

opposites. Opinion consists in divorcing the opposites completely from each other, or in being blind to the co-presence of one of the opposites in the other; it is aware only of that quality which is sensually perceived at a given moment, and unaware of the opposite quality, which is co-present but not sensually perceived at that moment. Opinion identifies the truth with what is sensually perceived; it is surrender to sense perception. Hence the fundamental error of opinion does not consist in assuming the two principles, light and darkness: both these principles and everything that flows from them belong to truth, and not to opinion. Accordingly, the second part of Parmenides' poem does not so much "systematize" opinion as supply the true explanation of opinion. In particular one fragment of the second part (Fr. 16), rightly understood, gives us the decisive information, supplied nowhere in the first part, about the true relation of truth and opinion.

Riezler's interpretation is a high point in the modern study of Parmenides. One can hardly go farther in the direction he followed, as long as one remains concerned with what Parmenides himself taught, as distinguished from what his poem may convey without his necessarily having intended it. And Riezler has disposed of the vulgar interpretation more completely than others have done. The question that remains is whether the vulgar interpretation, which has seen only the gulf separating the two parts of the poem, has not thereby seen something that is now in danger of being overlooked. Riezler himself spoke of the "imagery" of the second part. The second part does not, then, convey the pure truth. But the first part, too, does not convey the pure truth if, as Riezler contended, it does not contain the full truth: to say the least, it is not very explicit about the unity of opposites in being or in beingness. Thus it may appear that the two parts are not identical with truth and opinion, and that their relation only reflects the relation of truth and opinion—that neither pure truth nor pure opinion comes into full view in the poem. Yet Parmenides makes us expect them to come into full view in his poem.

Perhaps he did not desire that the expectation should be fulfilled in an obvious manner. In that case, the vulgar and traditional interpretation—according to which the first part sets forth the full truth and the second part mere opinion—may adequately render what one may call the immediately and universally visible meaning of the poem; and Riezler's interpretation would then transcend that meaning in the direction of the hidden and serious meaning, without, however, arriving there. Here as elsewhere an intransigent return to the surface may be the indispensable condition for progress toward the center.

IV

Riezler's critical metaphysics had claimed to be supported by the phenomenon of history, and to articulate that phenomenon in a fundamentally adequate manner. When he turned from critical metaphysics to ontology he ascribed to ontology the same support and the same function he had originally ascribed to critical metaphysics. Hence he was confronted by these two difficulties. First, there is a tension between the understanding of beingness as timeless law and order and the understanding of beingness as occurrence—between the understanding of beingness as transhistorical and the understanding of beingness as historical. And second, in Riezler's interpretation all understanding of beings or the concrete was said to belong to a particular dynamic context or to be itself concrete. Must the same not be true also of the understanding of beingness or concreteness as such? Or can the ontologist be an anonymous observer? If this is impossible, will ontology itself not become involved in the process, and thereby become relativized?

Riezler took up these questions in his "Treatise on the Beautiful: Toward an Ontology of Art"—*Traktat von Schönen: Zur Ontologie der Kunst* (1935). This work was meant to prepare a fully developed ontology, but only to prepare it: not the phenomenon of art but the phenomenon of history would have to be the starting point for a comprehensive ontology. The analysis of

art is, however, the most appropriate "prolegomenon to a doctrine of history," because it brings the analyst into the proper mood for his larger task. Art, and not thought or concept, is akin to beingness. Art, and not nature, is the domain of the beautiful. Art, and not religion, expresses man's self-affirmation. Art is religiousness without gods; it does not need religion, whereas religion needs art in order to be truly religion. And finally, art is the supreme remedy for that Christianity without God which, as Riezler suspected, constitutes a limitation to Heidegger's perspective.

What then, according to Riezler, is the essence of art? Art is expression, but in such a way that the expression is somehow that which is expressed. What is capable of being expressed is never a thing; things can only be described or denoted. Only states of the soul, only what we ourselves are or can be, can be expressed. For instance, a good painting of a stone, as distinguished from a mere copy, brings out those qualities that are possible states of ourselves or possible manners of our being: the bright or the dark, the rugged or the smooth, loneliness or togetherness, and so on. A good painting of a stone brings out the stony, which, though in different ways, is both in the stone and in ourselves. More precisely, it expresses, say, loneliness in such a way that togetherness is co-present with it though on the surface it is absent. The good work of art lets us see togetherness within loneliness, or hauntedness within serenity, that is, serenity as a state of a being that can be haunted. Trash or poor art is distinguished from high art by the fact that it does not bring out the co-present opposite of the sweet, the gruesome, and so on. When we say of a work of art that it is "alive" we mean precisely that it brings out possible states of the soul as co-present with their absent opposites. Art expresses an in-between of opposites. But it always expresses more than one in-between: it expresses the in-between of many in-betweens. By this very fact it expresses the soul, the texture of the soul, the beingness of the soul, beingness as such.

In the work of art beingness itself, the mystery of life, comes

into sight or appearance. This is the reason why the work of art is mysterious, inexhaustible, and resplendent. If the work of art makes beingness visible, beingness as such is visible or concealed, and therefore also more or less visible or concealed. Beingness is not indifferent to being visible or concealed; it has a directedness toward coming into sight. A being "is," or partakes of beingness, more or less, according to the degree to which beingness is visible in it. The stone as we ordinarily see it does not reveal beingness; it is just a stone. In the good painting the stone is no longer a stone, that is, something we could not possibly be. In the good painting the stone has become visible in its beingness; only in the work of art "is" the stone truly. A soul "is" to a higher or to a lower degree, the more or the less it is aware of its beingness and therewith of beingness as such. Only by being aware of beingness "are" we truly. Beingness "is" only if it appears. But beingness appears only in the work of art. Only in the work of art "is" beingness: only in the expression "is" that which is expressed. The unchangeable texture "is" only as occurrence. Reality "is" only if it is "seen." Or, as Riezler interpreted the verse of Parmenides, beingness and awareness of beingness belong inseparably together. But since beingness is occurrence, there is no necessity that it should be *actually* seen; and *if* it comes into sight it appears in every case in a different manner, that is, it *is* in every case in a different manner.

These suggestions, presented here only in the roughest outlines, indicate the direction in which Riezler sought the ground of history: the ground of history is beingness as occurrence. As far as I know, he did not attempt to apply this point of view to the history or the fate of ontology as he saw it—the appearance of the ontological problem in the beginnings of philosophy, the concealment of the ontological problem by the cosmological problem in the thought of Aristotle, the oblivion into which the ontological problem has fallen in modern times, and its reappearance in the thought of Heidegger.

In regard to the problem of art or of the beautiful Riezler held

that this is an eternal problem but that it depends on history whether it is raised, and whether it can be raised. Each epoch that is sure of itself has a specific understanding of what constitutes beauty or artistic excellence; each healthy epoch has a specific style which it regards as the only good style. Only epochs of decay can be fully open to the artistic excellence of all other times and spaces; in such epochs no style can any longer claim absolute superiority, and only in such epochs can the question of what constitutes artistic excellence as such be raised adequately. Therefore, as Riezler put it, it is a present need or predicament which imposed on him the raising of the problem of art. The present need in question is apparently a need that was never felt before: the eternal problem of art has become susceptible of being raised adequately for the first time now, in response to the present predicament. One is therefore compelled to wonder whether the relation between the present and unique need and the eternal problem is not a part of the eternal problem itself—in other words, whether one can legitimately or strictly speak of an eternal problem. It certainly becomes necessary to reflect on the present need in its unique character.

We find such a reflection in Riezler's 1929 speech *Über Gebundenheit und Freiheit des gegenwärtigen Zeitalters,* which I have already mentioned. There he referred to the relativism or nihilism that is the immediate consequence of the historical consciousness. Opposing this immediate consequence, he inferred from the relativization by the historical consciousness of every known Yes and No a demand for a new Yes and No. Since this demand arises out of the historical consciousness and is informed by the historical consciousness, one might conclude that the historical consciousness, having reached full self-consciousness, will point to a new Yes and No, prepare a new Yes and No, and perhaps even identify them. More precisely, since the historical consciousness is the insight into the root of all Yes's and No's, of all norms or oughts, it might be regarded as the absolute insight; therefore it may seem that the historical consciousness cannot rest satisfied

merely with a new Yes and No, but must point to the absolute Yes and No, the final Yes and No. This may seem to be necessary also because one might think that only the absolute, and not the provisional, can bind the conscience. In other words, the historical consciousness, if it understands itself, may seem to belong to the absolute moment in history, and thus to be beyond the relativity of history.

But Riezler rejected this line of thought altogether. History is an unfinishable process, and therefore it does not allow of an absolute moment, an absolute Yes and No, but only of a new Yes and No. The new Yes and No cannot be found by philosophy, but only by an act of history, of life itself. If I understand Riezler's thought correctly, he meant that philosophy cannot do more than understand human life as historical, as dynamic context, as moving in a space that is itself moving, and thereby to understand the formal character of all possible Yes's and No's, without being able to deduce from this understanding any substantive Yes and No. Philosophy is limited to the task of bringing to light the eternal structure of life or history, "the eternal *humanum,*" the immutable form of man's mutability. This is the eternal problem to which philosophy seeks the solution—a solution which, if it is to be adequate, cannot but be an eternal, an eternally valid solution. The eternity of the problem and of the solution does not depend on whether they are eternally accessible. In following this line of thought, Riezler was eventually driven to abandon the quest for a new Yes and No in favor of a quest for the immutable or eternal " 'good itself' which is the measure of all measures." In his *Physics and Reality,* in which he spoke through the mouth of Aristotle, he said that "knowledge of being itself . . . is in itself the end. Its perfection is being's pure activity, the ultimate Whither through which all ends are ends."

If we are permitted to say that historicism is the view according to which at least all concrete or profound thought belongs essentially to a concrete dynamic context, and that Platonism is the

view according to which pure thought, being "anonymous," transcends every dynamic context, then we must go on to say that Riezler felt too strongly the difficulties of historicism not to be attracted by Platonism, but was too deeply impressed by both art and historical change to follow Plato resolutely. From the point of view of Platonism there can be only one type of classic art. Riezler, however, held the view, which is much more plausible today, that there is classicity not only in Greek art but also in Chinese art, mediaeval art, impressionism, and so on. By conceiving of the classic as the artistically excellent, he avoided the childish absurdities of vulgar relativism or historicism. Riezler was far too intelligent and too experienced in things beautiful to believe for a moment that the application of the distinctions between art and trash, between works of higher quality and works of lower quality, is "merely subjective," or that the appreciation of artistic quality depends in any significant way on historical or extraneous knowledge. The grasp of "the eternal *humanum*" may not be sufficient for legitimatizing one's preferring one Yes to another Yes, or preferring, say, classic Greek art to classic mediaeval art; it may not lead us, therefore, beyond what one may call a qualified relativism. But it is amply sufficient for revealing fully the absurdity of unqualified or vulgar relativism.

V

The impression of Riezler's thought received from his German books is confirmed by his English books, *Physics and Reality* (1940) and *Man: Mutable and Immutable* (1950). There is a very close and very obvious connection between these two works: *Man* begins where *Physics and Reality* ends. The character of *Physics and Reality* is sufficiently indicated by its subtitle: "Lectures of Aristotle on Modern Physics at an International Congress of Scientists, Cambridge, 1940." Riezler made Aristotle subject the physics of the modern centuries to a radical criticism. Modern physics is in our time manifestly confronted with radical difficulties that one cannot overcome by ascribing to the propositions of

physics a merely operational meaning, that is, by abandoning the original claim of physics that it reveals nature as it is in itself. There is only one way out of the impasse, the way shown by Aristotle. The primary theme of physics is beings as they move or change in time. Such beings are not accessible to modern physics but are accessible to the modern physicists, as to any other human beings: "The nature you talk about as scientists is not the nature you mean when you say 'I am.' " Aristotle approaches the phenomenon of motion or change by never losing sight of, even by starting from, man's experience and understanding of himself as a being that moves or changes in time. The more precise articulation of this experience and understanding is the function of Riezler's *Man: Mutable and Immutable—The Fundamental Structure of Social Life.*

As is indicated by its full title, this work is devoted to the analysis of man, of human life as radically social, or of society, social life, as radically human: the core of society is not institutions, interests, or even ideas, but passions and the striving for happiness, *la condition humaine* as occurrence, the heart and its logic, the life of the soul. In the language of the schools one would have to say that Riezler's doctrine of man and of things human is social philosophy as distinguished from political philosophy. His theme was "society" as "the universe of response, the spontaneous culture," distinguished from the state, which is brought into being by society for the service of society. Nor is society identical with the nation, although Riezler still contended that the complete or comprehensive society is the nation rather than "the doubtful unity of a 'civilization' comprising more than one nation." The society that supplied the framework for Riezler's analysis of the passions is "the 'idea' of society," or what "any specific group can be," or "the scheme of a relational structure" which articulates "the human elements that in their mutual relationships constitute society as society." "As a scheme it is an abstraction." It abstracts especially from the purposes of society. In this context Riezler opposed the thinking that is in terms of

means and ends, and especially the notion that there can be a "single purpose to which everything else is . . . merely a means."

From this we can understand why Riezler's social philosophy, as distinguished from the political philosophy of the past, does not contain an ethics proper: his central subject was not virtue and justice, but the passions (or the attitudes or the moods). In accordance with this, he discussed the relation of the I, the Self, which can never become an object, to the Me, that is, the I as object, without even alluding to the conscience. Riezler was aware of the fact that one must not look at social phenomena in the light of questions or doctrines, to which "no society pays any attention." But he did not draw from this the conclusion that social phenomena must be understood primarily in the way in which they come into sight in the perspective of the citizen or statesman. He did not begin at the true beginning of analysis, with the surface. The perspective of Riezler the analyst differed from the outset from the perspective of the citizen or statesman. Opposing "the man-environment scheme" which is the framework accepted by present-day social science, he developed a much more solid and much more fertile scheme: not man confronting his environment, of which other human beings as his objects are a part, but a We which constitutes itself by an I and a Thou mutually responding to each other, and distinguishes itself from a They, living "in" its world.

But while "We in our world" is more concrete than the Cartesian ego, which is shut up within "the box of its consciousness," it is nevertheless no more than a correction of the Cartesian starting point: the new starting point is as much a construction as the Cartesian one. The unnatural nouns, "the I," "the Me," "the Thou," "the We," reveal clearly this state of things. Riezler tried to proceed toward the concrete by starting from an abstraction. Thus he did not arrive at the concrete. He did not ascend from the phenomena, as primarily given, to their principles.

The hidden and modified Cartesianism which underlies the framework employed in *Man* is linked with the fundamental

premise of Riezler's thought. That Cartesianism showed itself at the beginning in the monadological conception that was developed in *Gestalt und Gesetz,* for the monad is a transformation of the Cartesian ego; it is distinguished from the Cartesian ego especially by its spontaneity. In *Man* the monad is in turn transformed into "We in our world." The question guiding Riezler's monadology concerned the essential character of the monad, or the essential structure of the life of the monad; it was not the question of what unites the infinitely many monads so that they form the world. This latter question, the question of the *kosmos,* was regarded as unanswerable; the *kosmos* remained an x. Riezler's monadology (as distinguished from Leibniz's monadology) took the place of cosmology, of speculative metaphysics, because speculative metaphysics appeared to be impossible.

When Riezler replaced monadology by ontology his fundamental premise remained the same. He stressed the fact that beyond any "world" which as such is the world of a "We," including both the "world" of a possible world society and the "world" of the anonymous observer, there is *the* world, but *the* world remains eternally an x. *The* world is then not the visible whole, limited by the visible "starred heaven above me" and the visible firm earth. Heaven and earth and what is between them have lost the contours visible to the eyes of the body or the eyes of the mind, for those contours have been dissolved by the acid of modern natural science; and they can acquire visible contours again, or "natures," only by entering, as it were, into any of the many historical worlds. Not those visible contours but only the fabric of beingness, and this means primarily the fabric of man's beingness, has the dignity of the immutable. In spite of Riezler's appeal from modern physics to Aristotelian physics, and from the historicist immersion in mutable man to the immutable in man, modern physics and its twin sister, "the historical consciousness," were the fundamental presuppositions underlying his ontology.

Yet however doubtful one may be as regards the fundamental

premise of Riezler and the framework he used for his analyses of the passions and of misery and happiness, this doubt becomes almost irrelevant as soon as one is confronted by these analyses themselves, and by the breadth, the earnestness, and the delicacy which inform them. These analyses far surpass anything that is at present being attempted within psychology or any other discipline.

With a view to the present state of the social sciences, one point needs to be mentioned with emphasis. Just as in earlier thought, knowledge of the nature of the soul was seen to lead to knowledge of the right or good activity of the soul, that is, to knowledge of the good life, Riezler's understanding of the essential structure of human life led him in a perfectly legitimate manner to non-arbitrary assertions about what constitutes the good life, about "the order of nature" as distinguished from convention. His analysis of the fundamental structure of society is "apparently pre-moral," but only apparently so. He shows that the common belief, according to which there is no legitimate way leading from "facts" to "values," has no other basis than a shockingly narrow understanding of "facts." To understand the "fact" of language means to understand the unchangeable principles underlying the distinction between "perfect speech" and speech that is more or less imperfect. To understand the "fact" of laughter means to realize the variety of levels of laughter—with, at the bottom, the silly laughter of silly people about things that are not ridiculous, and divine laughter at the top. To understand the "fact" of friendship—a "fact" that is perhaps never fully a "fact"—means to realize the low or degrading character of loveless sex and the narrowness of hate as a passion that "knows no sky."

By speaking humanly about the human passions, Riezler let us see incidentally the powerful reasons why he could not have been mistaken or misled about the meaning of 1933. His analyses of the passions are also meant as a critique of the "narrow humanity" which, according to Riezler, informs Heidegger's analysis of *Existenz;* they point to the riddle posed by Heidegger's obstinate

silence about love or charity, on the one hand, and about laughter and the things that deserve to be laughed at on the other.

Riezler's analyses of the passions culminate in his analysis of shame and awe as respect for the vulnerable and the secret. Human dignity, Riezler suggested, stands and falls by shame and awe, because man's greatness is co-present in his littleness, and his littleness is co-present in his greatness. It was ultimately because he grasped the meaning of shame and awe that Riezler was a liberal, a lover of privacy. By invading men's privacy one does not come to know them better; one merely ceases to see them. For a man's being is revealed by the broad character of his life, his deeds, his works, by what he esteems and reveres not in word but in deed—by the stars for which his soul longs, if it longs for any stars. Not anguish but awe is "the fundamental mood" which discloses being as being. Because he was animated by this spirit, Riezler felt more at home in the thought of ancient Greece than in the thought of his time.

In pondering over Riezler's highest aspiration I have thought more than once of Thucydides—of Thucydides' quiet and manly gentleness which sought no solace and which looked in freedom, but not in indifference, at the opposites whose unity is hidden; which did not attempt to reduce one opposite to the other; and which regarded the higher of the opposites not, as Socrates did, as stronger, but as more vulnerable, more delicate, than the lower. This is the treasure that Riezler divined, the treasure for which he longed and which he tried to bring to light again. We shall honor his memory best if we follow the light which he followed and to which he never ceased pointing.